

CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST

"EVERY PLANT WHICH MY HEAVENLY FATHER HATH NOT PLANTED SHALL BE ROOTED UP."

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NATURAL RELIGION.

LONDON, Dec. 26, 1855.

So David Hume, the historian of England, was led by his contemporaries an infidel, and he was presumed to enquire into the origin of that religion which engrossed their minds. This was a supposition, because we find the same action beginning in this day.

Enquiries of such men as David Hume—a man called to be of unshaken talents—are valuable in showing the sentiments that men of erudition entertain. Thinking a summary of his opinions, and presenting them to your readers, I have translated them. Many of them, it will be seen, must be accepted in reason, whilst others may be deemed fallacious, but their fallacy can be easily detected by those who make such subjects matters of serious enquiry.

In introducing the subject, he sets out with these two propositions, viz: First, concerning the foundation of religion on reason; and secondly, that concerning its origin in human nature. The first, which is the most important, "happily admits of the most obvious, at least the clearest, solution." "The whole frame of nature speaks in intelligent author, and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief in an acceptance in reason, whilst others may be deemed fallacious, but their fallacy can be easily detected by those who make such subjects matters of serious enquiry."

His second proposition in proof is—that from the commencement of society to a later date Polytheism was the first and most ancient religion of mankind. That 1700 years ago all men, with few exceptions, were idolaters; and that the further we plunge into remote history, we find them more so, and no where was there a mark or symptom of any more perfect religion. What, he enquires, can be opposed to so full an evidence? Is it to be asserted, before the knowledge of letters, or the discovery of any art or science, that men entertained the principles of pure Theism? The savage tribes of Asia, Africa and America, were all idolaters, and there is no exception.

"It seems certain that, according to the natural progress of human thought, the ignorant multitude must first entertain some grovelling and familiar notion of superior power: before they stretch their imagination to that perfect being who bestowed order on the whole frame of nature; for to suppose otherwise, it were as easy to say that men obtained polished letters, or studied geometry before agriculture, or assert that the Deity appeared to the general mind as a pure spirit, before he was apprehended to be a powerful though limited being, with human passions and human organs. The mind rises gradually from the inferior to the superior, by abstracting from what is imperfect, to an idea of perfection. Nothing could divert this natural progress of thought but some insuperable argument, which would make it overstep, at a bound, the vast interval which is interposed between the human and divine natures."

The causes of familiar objects never excite the curiosity, however extraordinary they may be in themselves, and are passed by the ignorant without much examination or enquiry. Adam, as described by Milton, rising at once in the full perfection of his faculties, would naturally be astonished at the glories of natural things, and might be led to ask whence that wonderful scene arose; but not so a barbarous and non-sensational animal, such as was man in the first origin of society, preserved by numerous wants and passions; and gradually accustomed to the face of nature from his infancy, he has no leisure to enquire into the nature or cause of the appearances he sees, and the more regular and uniform the natural sequences, the less is he inclined to scrutinize them.

If men were first led into the belief of a Supreme Being by reasoning from the frame of nature, they never could embrace idolatry, for the same principle of reason which first produced would preserve such a belief.

ments, so clear and obvious as to carry conviction to the generality of mankind, the same arguments which first diffused the opinions will still preserve them in their original purity. If the arguments were abstruse, then they would have been confined to but few. So, either way, it is impossible that a pure Theism could have been the primary religion of the human race, and have afterwards, by corruption, have given place to idolatry. Reason, when obvious, prevents corruption—when abstruse, it keeps the opinions entirely from the ignorant, who are alone liable to corrupt principles or opinions.

If the enquiry is concerning the origin of religion, the thought must be turned to Idolatry or Polytheism. When men are led into the apprehension of an intelligent power by a contemplation of the works of nature, they could only conceive of a single being "who bestowed existence and order upon this vast machine." To some minds it may not appear absurd that several independent beings, endowed with superior wisdom, might combine in the execution of one regular plan; yet this, if possible, is neither supported by probability nor necessity. All things in the universe are evidently of one piece—each is adjusted to the other; one design pervades the whole. The uniformity leads to an acknowledgement of one author. On the other hand, if we leave out nature, and trace the footsteps of invisible power in various and contrary events of life, we are led into Polytheism, and to the acknowledgment of several limited and imperfect beings, for we continually see one power overruling the good of another—a contrariety "in their intentions and designs—a combat of opposing powers." It must, therefore, be concluded that in nations which have embraced Polytheism, the first ideas of religion arose, not from a contemplation of nature, but from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears which actuate the human mind—so we find the provinces of the Deities are separated. Thus we see Juno invoked at marriages, Lucina at births, Neptune by seamen, Mars by warriors, Ceres by husbandmen, and Mercury by merchants. Each natural event is supposed to be governed by some intelligent agent, and may be the subject of prayers or thanksgiving. In Hesiod's time there were 30,000 deities.

To carry men's attention beyond the visible course of things, and lead them to infer an invisible intelligence, some passion must prompt their thought, some motive urge the enquiry; but to what passion shall recourse be had to explain the effect of so mighty a consequence—not purely speculative curiosity, or pure love of truth; that would be too refined for gross apprehensions, and would lead to an enquiry into natural causes—a subject too large for narrow capacities. The passions, therefore, which would work upon barbarians, could only be the ordinary affections of life—concern for happiness, dread of future misery, terror of death, thirst for revenge, and appetite for food.

Man is placed in the world as in a theatre, where the true spring and causes of every event are hidden, nor has he sufficient wisdom to see and prevent the ills with which he is continually threatened. He hangs in suspense between life and death, health and sickness, plenty and want, which are distributed by secret and unknown causes, whose operation is often unexpected and always unaccountable. This then becomes an object of fear, and the passions are kept in alarm by an expectation of events, and the imagination forms ideas of those powers on which man has so entire a dependence. Could man anatomize nature, he would find the causes are nothing but the particular fabric and structure of the minute parts of his own body and of external objects, and that by a regular and constant machinery all the events, about which they are so anxious, are produced. This philosophy exceeds the comprehension of the ignorant, who cannot conceive of the unknown causes in a general and confused manner. The more they consider these causes, and the uncertainty of their operations, the less satisfaction they meet with in their research, and at last would abandon so arduous an inquiry were it not for a propensity in human nature which leads to a system which gives a seeming satisfaction. There is a tendency in man to conceive all beings like themselves; thus, they find faces in the moon, armies in the clouds, and malice or good will in everything which hurts or pleases them. Philosophers cannot entirely exempt themselves from this natural frailty. The absurdity is not less when human passions and infirmities are transferred to the Deity, representing him as jealous, revengeful, capricious, and partial, in short, as a wicked and foolish man in all but his superior power and authority. It is no wonder, then, that man, being ignorant of causes, and anxious concerning them, should acknowledge a dependence on invincible powers possessed of sentiments and intelligence.

In proportion as men's lives are governed by accidents, as gamblers, sailors, they are always more superstitious. So, before the establishment of order and government, men being subject to fortuitous accidents, it was natural that superstition should prevail, and put men on enquiries concerning the invisible powers who dispose their lot. Ignorant of science, and too little curious to observe the admirable adjustment of final causes, they remained unacquainted with the first supreme creator, who, by his Almighty will, bestowed order on the whole frame of nature. Being unable to comprehend this grand unity, they supposed these deities, however potent and invisible, to be nothing but a species of human creatures. Such limited beings, incapable of extending their influences everywhere, must be vastly multiplied to answer that variety

of events which happen in nature. Every place, then, became stored with local deities, and idolatry prevailed.

Prosperity is easily received and few questions are asked concerning its cause or author, on the other hand adversity alarms, and enquiries are set on foot to arrive at the principles from whence it arose. Popular Divines display the advantages of affection to buy men to a due sense of religion. The topic is not confined to them only, for the ancients equally employed it.

The only theological point to which mankind yields an universal assent, is that there is an invisible intelligent power in the world, but of the power or attributes and qualities, whether of one, or of several deities, there is the widest difference of opinion. Before the revival of letters, "our ancestors in Europe believed there was one Supreme God, whose power, though itself uncontrollable, yet was often exerted by the interposition of his subordinate ministers, who executed his sacred purpose." They also believed that nature was full of other invisible powers, fairies, goblins, elves and sprites, beings stronger and mightier than men, but inferior to the celestial natures who surround the throne of God. Yet a denial of this belief in that age, would have incurred the appellation of atheism. To one who justly considers, the gods of the Polytheists are no better than the elves and fairies of our ancestors. These gods had no first principle of mind or thought, no supreme government, no divine contrivance or intention in the fabric of the world. The Lacedaemonians when engaged in war, put up their prayers early in the morning to be beforehand with their enemies, and as being the first solicitors, pre-engaged the gods in their favor. The Tyrians when besieged by Alexander, chained the statue of Hercules, to prevent the deity deserting to the enemy. Augustus having twice lost his fleet, forbid the statue of Neptune to be carried in the procession of the gods, and fancied he had sufficiently avenged himself by that expedient. After the death of Germanicus, the people were so enraged at the gods, that they stoned them in their temples, and openly renounced all allegiance to them. To ascribe the origin and fabric of the universe to these imperfect beings, never entered into the imagination of any polytheist, and it was supposed that gods and men sprung equally from the unknown powers of nature. Pandora is the only instance of a creation, and she was formed by the gods in despite to Prometheus, who furnished men with the stolen fire from the celestial regions. The ancient mythologists seem to have embraced the idea of generation, rather than of creation, and thence accounted for the origin of the universe.

It was late before the philosophers bethought them to have recourse to a mind or supreme intelligence as the first cause of all, and so common was it in those days to account for the origin of things without a deity, that Anaxagoras, the first unbounded Theist amongst the ancients, was the first who was accused of atheism. Epicurus when a boy, reading the verses of Hesiod—"eldest of beings, chaos first arose, next earth wide stretched the seat of all, whence chaos, said Epicurus?" He was told by his preceptor that he must have recourse to the philosophers for a solution. On this hint, Epicurus left philosophy to betake himself to that science, from which only he could obtain satisfaction with regard to these sublime subjects.

Not only in their first origin, were the gods supposed to be dependent on nature, but through the whole period of their existence, they were subject to the dominion of fate or necessity. Agrippa in addressing the Roman people said: *Think of the force of necessity to which even the Gods must submit.*

"Whoever learns by argument the existence of invisible intelligent power, must reason from the admirable contrivance of natural objects, and must suppose the work to be the workmanship of that Divine Being, the original cause of all things." The ignorant Polytheist so far from admitting that idea, defines every part of the universe, and conceives all the conspicuous productions of nature to be themselves so many real deities. Thus, however, strong men's propensity is to believe invisible intelligent power in nature, their propensity is equally strong to rest their attention on sensible, visible objects. In the mythologies of the ancients, plain traces of allegory can be seen. That they are entirely perfect is not to be expected. The deities were so little removed from human creatures, that men affected with strong sentiments of veneration for a hero or public benefactor, might convert him into a God—Painters and sculptors furnished sensible representations of the Deities, whom they clothed in human figures, and gave increase to public elevation, and determined its object. In ruder ages, for want of the arts, men deified plants, animals, and unorganized matter, rather than be without a sensible object of worship.

Stilpo was banished by the counsel of Areopagus, for affirming that the statue of Minerva in the citadel was no god, but the workmanship of Phidias the sculptor. What degree of reason is to be expected in the religious belief of the ignorant of other nations, when Athenians and Areopagites could entertain such gross misconceptions?

These are the general principles of polytheism, founded on human nature, and but little dependent upon caprice and accident. Almost all idolaters concur in these general principles and conceptions, and even the particular characters and provinces, they assign their deities are not extremely different. The Greeks and Romans without much difficulty, found their deities everywhere, saying this is Mercury and that Venus. The Saxon goddess Hertha was considered synonymous with the Mater

Tellus of the Romans, and this conjecture is evidently just.

The doctrine of one Supreme Deity is very ancient, and has spread itself over great and populous nations, and has been embraced by all ranks and conditions of persons, but those who think it owes its success to the prevalence of the force of those invincible reasons on which it is founded, would show themselves but ill acquainted with the ignorance and stupidity of the mass, with their incurable prejudices in favor of their particular superstitions. Even in this day, ask one of the mass, why he believes in a supreme God? He will tell you of an unexpected death. The accident of such an one, the drought of the season, all of which he ascribes to the operations of Providence instead of stretching forth his hand and tracing in the adaptation of its parts and justness of its organism, its perfect union, and then ask if the question was not answered? The reasons, which with acute reasoners, are the very difficulties in the admission of the idea of a supreme intelligence are with the ignorant the sole argument for it.

Many Theists have denied a particular Providence, and have asserted the Supreme Mind or First Principle of all things, has fixed general laws by which Nature is governed, gives free and uninterrupted course to those laws, and disturbs not at every turn the settled order of events by particular volition. From the established and rigid observance of fixed rules, draw the chief argument of their belief, and from the same principles, answer objections urged against it. A little philosophy says lord Bacon, *wakes men atheists, a great deal reconciles them to religion.* Prodiges and miracles impress the ignorant with the strongest sentiment of religion, the causes of the events seeming to them the most unknown and unaccountable. The ignorant, in nations who have embraced the doctrine of Theism still build it on irrational and superstitious opinions, and are never led into that opinion by any certain train of argument, but by a certain train of thinking suited to their capacities. In proportion as men's fears become urgent, they invent new strains of adulation, and even he who outrivals his predecessors, in heaping up titles for his divinity, is sure to be outdone by his successors in never and more pompous epithets of praise, thus they run into inexplicable mystery, and destroy the intelligent nature of their Deity, on which alone any rational worship can be founded.

Even when this notion of a Supreme Deity is established, although it should lessen every other worship, yet if a nation has entertained an opinion of a subordinate deity, saint or angel, then addresses to that being gradually rise on them, and encrease upon the adoration due to the Supreme God. The Deity who for love transformed himself into a bull to carry off Europa, dethroned his father Saturn, became the *optimus maximus* of the heathen, and notwithstanding the many sublime ideas suggested by Moses, many ignorant Jews seem still to have conceived the supreme being as a mere "typical Deity or National Protector." Rather than relinquish this propensity to adulation, religionists, in all ages, have involved themselves in the greatest absurdities and contradictions.

"That original intelligence say the Magians, who is the First Principle of all things, discovers himself immediately to the mind and understanding alone, but has placed the sun as his image in the visible universe, and is a faint copy of the glory which resides in the higher heavens. If you would escape his displeasure, you must never set your foot on the ground, nor spit in the fire, nor throw water upon it, although it were consuming a whole city! 'Who can express the perfections of the Almighty says the Mahomedan? Even the noblest of his works, if compared to him, are but as dust and ashes. How much more must human conceptions fall short of his infinite perfections. His smile and favor renders men forever happy, and to obtain it for your children, the best method to obtain it for them, is to cut off when infants, a little bit of skin about half the breadth of a farthing. The Getaes were genuine Theists and Unitarians, they asserted their God was the only true God, yet every fifth year, they sacrificed a human being whom they sent as messenger to him, to inform him of their wants. When it thundered, they became so provoked, that in order to return the defiance, they let fly arrows at him, and declined not the combat as unequal, so says Herodotus. 'It is remarkable that the principles of religion have a kind of flux and reflux in the human mind, and men have natural tendency to rise from Idolatry to Theism, and to sink again from Theism to Idolatry.' Men, but with few exceptions, never elevate their contemplation so as to discover the Supreme mind, the admirable work they see, they consider in a confined and selfish view, and finding their happiness to depend on secret influences and unforeseen occurrences of external objects, they regard with perpetual attention the unknown causes which govern all natural events, and distribute ill and good by their powerful but silent operations. The unknown causes are appealed to on every emergency, and thus become the perpetual objects of human fears and hopes. By degrees, the imagination uneasy in this abstract conception of ideas, begins to render them more particular, and to clothe them in shapes more suited to its natural conception. Hence the origin of Religion, and of Idolatry, and Polytheism."

The anxious concern of man will not allow him to remain long in the first simple conception. Exaggerated praises swell the idea of them, and elevating the deities to the utmost perfection, at last bestows attributes of unity, simplicity, Infinity, and Spirituality. These ideas being disproportioned to vulgar comprehension, remain not long in their original purity, but require to be supported by exterior mediators and subordinate agents, which interpose between man and the Supreme God; these Demi-Gods partaking more of human nature, become more familiar, and eventually become the chief objects of devotion, and gradually real idolatry, then falling into grosser and more vulgar conceptions, at last destroy themselves and make the tide of opinion again turn to pure Theism. This tendency to turn back, some Theists, the Jews, the Mahomedans, have been aware of, and have forbidden the arts of statuary and paintings in representing even the human figure, for small is the transition then to represent the invisible. Men by their feebleness are not satisfied with conceiving their deity as a pure Spirit, yet their fears prevent their imputing to him the least shadow of limitation or imperfection. They fluctuate between two opinions, a Spiritual Deity to a corporeal one, and from a corporeal one to a statue or visible representation. Polytheism being founded on tradition, is liable to have any practice, however corrupt, authorized by it, thus full scope is left for knavery to impose upon credulity. It has this advantage, it admits the gods of other sects and nations to shade the divinity, and renders all with their rites and ceremonies compatible with each other. Theism by presenting one sole Deity, banishes everything frivolous unreasonable, or cruel from religious worship, and sets before men the most commanding motives of justice and benevolence.

Idolatry is of a tolerant spirit. When the oracle of Delphi was asked, what rites were most acceptable to the gods, it answered those legally established in each city. In those ages, even priests could allow salvation to those of a different communion. The Romans adopted the gods of a conquered people, and never disputed the attributes of the deity of the territory in which they resided, Egypt excepted. Those nations which maintain the unity of God, are the most intolerant. The implacable and narrow spirit of Judaism is known. The Mahomedans announce damnation to all other creeds. The Christian toleration proceeds from the steady resolution of the civil magistrate, in opposition to the continual efforts of bigots and priests. The disciples of Zoroaster shut the doors of heaven to all but the Magians.

When Theism forms the fundamental principle of any popular religion, that tenet is so conformable to sound reason, that philosophy is apt to incorporate itself with it, and if the dogmas of the system be contained in a book, such as the Alcoran, or be determined by a visible authority, as the Roman Pontiff, speculative reasoners naturally carry on their current, and embrace a theory which has been instilled into them from their earliest education. But as these appearances often prove deceitful, philosophy will soon find herself unequally yoked, and instead of regulating each principle as they advance together, she is at every turn perverted to save the purposes of superstition. For besides the unavoidable incoherencies, which must be reconciled and adjusted, one may safely affirm that all popular theology, especially the scholastic, has a kind of appetite for absurdity and contradiction. If that theology went not beyond reason and common sense, her doctrines would appear too easy and familiar. Amazement must of necessity be raised; mystery affected; darkness and obscurity sought after, and a foundation of merit afforded to devout votaries who desire an opportunity of subduing their rebellious reason by the belief of the most unintelligible sophisms."

"To oppose the torrent of scholastic reason by argument, is like pretending to stop the ocean with a bulrush. Will you set up profane reason against sacred mystery? No punishment is great enough for such impiety. The same fires which were kindled for heretics, may be lighted for philosophers."

"It must be allowed, the Roman Catholics are a very learned sect, yet Averroes, the famous Arabian, declares that of all religions, the most absurd and nonsensical, is that whose votaries eat, after having created their deity."

It is to be observed, notwithstanding the dogmatical and imperious style of all superstition, the conviction of the votaries is more affected than real, and rarely approaches to that solid belief and persuasion which governs them in the affairs of life. They dare not avow even to themselves the doubts they entertain. They make a merit of implicit faith and disguise to themselves their real infidelity, by the most positive bigotry, but nature is too hard for them, and suffers not these obscure glimmerings to equal the strong impressions made by common sense and experience.

A cause which rendered the ancient religion looser than the modern is, that the former was traditional and the latter scriptural. The stories of the Gods were as numberless as the christian legends, and altho every one believed a part of these stories, yet no one could believe or know the whole; while at the same time all must have acknowledged that no one part stood on a better foundation than the rest. The difference between the ancients and moderns is only in degree—an ancient will place a stroke of impiety and one of superstition through a whole discourse; a modern often thinks in the same way, though he may be more guarded in his expressions. Livy acknowledged, as frankly as any divine would at present, the common incredulity of the age, but then he condemns it as severely. And who can imagine that a national superstition, which could delude so great a man, would not also impose upon the generality of the people.

The Greeks condemned Socrates for respecting the fables of Saturn and Jupiter, yet Socrates tells us the immortality of the soul was the received opinion of the people. Xenophon's conduct is at once an incontestable proof of the general credulity of men in those ages, and the incoherencies, in all

ages of mens opinions and religious belief. Cicero whom his own family affected to be a devout religionist, did not scruple in the open court to treat the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as a most ridiculous fable.

"There is a fact which may be worth the attention of those who make human nature a subject of enquiry. In every religion, however sublime, the verbal definition it gives of the Divinity, many of the votaries will seek the divine favor not by virtue and good morals but either by frivolous observances, immoderate zeal, rapturous ecstasies, or by the belief of mysterious and absurd opinions. The best part of the *Saddai* and *Pentateuch* consist in precepts of morality and that part is always the least observed. When the Romans were attacked by pestilence they never ascribed their sufferings to their vices, or dreamed of repentance. Never thought they were the general robbers of the world, whose avarice had made desolate the earth. They only created a dictator who drove a nail into a door, by means of which they thought they had sufficiently appeased an offended deity."

"If we could suppose a popular religion were found, in which it was declared that nothing but morality should gain the divine favor—and an order of priests was formed to inculcate this opinion by daily sermons—so inveterate is prejudice, that for want of some superstition the people would make their very attendance on these sermons the essentials of religion, rather than place them in virtue and good morals. The sublime prologue of Zaleucus laws did not inspire the Locrians with sounder notions of the measures of acceptance with the Deity than were familiar to other Greeks." It is universally the case that men degrade their deities unto similitudes with themselves and consider them as species of human creatures somewhat more potent and intelligent.

"It is not satisfactory to say the practice of morality is more difficult than superstition and is therefore to be rejected. Not to mention the penances of the Bramins, it is certain on the Rhamadan. The Mahomedans for days, in the hottest months of the year, and in some of the hottest climates of the world, fast from the rising to the setting of the sun. The four Lenten of the Russians, and the austerities of some of the Romish saints appear more disagreeable than meekness and benevolence, and the practice of moral duty. In short all virtue, when men are reconciled to it by ever so little practice, is agreeable. All superstition forever odious and burdensome."

The solution of the difficulty may be this. The social duties are performed because they cannot be neglected without breaking through all ties of nature and morality—but a man if truly virtuous is drawn to his duty without effort. So in regard to more austere virtues—as temperance, integrity, filial duty, and public spirit, the moral obligation removes all pretence to religious merit, and virtuous conduct is esteemed as no more than what we owe society and ourselves. In this a superstitious man finds nothing which shall commend him to divine favor. He does not consider that the most genuine method of serving his God is by promoting the happiness of his creatures. Any practice recommended him which either serves no purpose in life, or offers violence to his natural inclination he adopts, and if by the practice he sacrifices his ease and quiet, his claim appears to rise on him in proportion to the zeal he discovers. In restoring a loan or paying a debt his God is not beholden to him, because these were acts he was bound to perform, but if he fast a day, or whip himself, this in his opinion has a direct reference to the service of his God. Hence the greatest crimes have been found compatible with a superstitious piety and devotion. It has been observed that enormities of the blackest dye are apt to produce superstitious terrors and increase the religious passions. Bomilcar the Carthaginian, and Catiline the Roman, are instances. So after the commission of crimes there arises remorse, which permits no rest to the mind, but forces it to have recourse to religious rites and ceremonies in expiation of course to religious rites and ceremonies or disorders the internal frame promotes the interests of superstition, and nothing is more destructive of it than a manly, steady virtue. Barbarity and caprice, however nominally disguised universally forms the ruling character of the Deity in popular religions. Priests are ever ready to foster such thoughts, for the more tremendous the Deity is represented, the more tame and submissive do men become to his ministers.

Though men may be so ignorant as not to see a Sovereign Author in the more obvious works of nature, yet it seems scarcely possible that a person of good understanding should reject the idea when suggested to him. The uniform laws which prevail throughout the universe leads us to conceive this intelligence is undivided and single, when the prejudices of education do not oppose so reasonable a theory. Even the contrarieties of nature become proofs of some consistent plan, and establish one single purpose and intention. Good and ill in life are universally intermingled, the draughts of life, according to the poets fiction, are always mixed from vessels in each hand of Jupiter. The more exquisite the good, the sharper the pang allied to it, &c. In general no course of life has such safety as the temperate and moderate which maintain as far as possible a mediocrity in every thing.

"As the good, the great, the sublime are found in the genuine principles of Theism it may be expected in the analogy of nature, the base, the absurd, the mean and terrifying will be discovered equally in religious fictions and chimerae."

"The universal propensity to believe in invisible intelligent power, if not an original instinct, may be considered a kind of mark which the divine workman has set on his work."

What so pure as some of the morals included in some theological systems, and what so corrupted as some of the practices to which these systems give rise.

The length to which this article has reached prevents me, as I intended, remarking upon some of the passages. I refrain, without concern, feeling sure that our Spiritual friends, by their first appreciation of the good and true, will be themselves enabled to detect what fallacies there may be in the propositions of Mr. Hume.

In Brotherhood, I am, S. B.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JAN. 26, 1886.

DR. DODS' EXPLANATION.

According to the published notice, this *notorious* expounder of Spiritualism, delivered his first lecture at the Stuyvesant Institute on Sunday evening, January 20. The audience filled the house to its utmost capacity, and many had to go away because they could not be accommodated with seats.

This anxiety to hear the explanation of Dr. Dods, was very natural, for his issue with Spiritualism had all the *positiveness* of an experienced thinker, and a close reasoner, and, for the time, turned the popular excitement away from an examination of the manifestations of the Spirits, by the plausibility of his theory, and the determined positiveness of his logic.

Of the many views and reviews which the publication of his "back brain theory" called out, it was useless now to speak, more than to say, that, whether good or bad, just or unjust, they all tended to enhance the importance of the controversy, and associate the name of Dr. Dods more permanently with the progress of the argument and the developments of the phenomena. We say, naturally enough, therefore, the anxiety to hear, and the desire to know the cause or causes of Dr. Dods' conversion to Spiritualism, was great, and the curiosity commendable.

And now that we have the explanation, not a few have asked us—What do you think of it? For many seem as puzzled by the explanation as they were previously amazed at the Doctor's philosophy. The reader, too, doubtless, has asked "many a time and oft" a similar question, and would like to know what caused the "old man eloquent," the "renowned philosopher" and "discoverer in science," to pass from the championship of materialism and popular *cant* to an acceptance of the "impossibilities" of Spiritualism—a curiosity which we would be glad to gratify, were it fully in our power. As it is, however, we will attempt to outline some of the most prominent phases of the Doctor's experience, hoping that ere long he will publish his lecture, and thus give as large a circulation to the explanation and correction, as he gave to his theory of the Manifestations.

The Doctor commenced his lecture by referring to the criticisms, personal and otherwise, which the friends and foes of Spiritualism had made on the Doctor, and the supposed *motives* that prompted him to take the popular side against Spiritualism.

The extracts he selected and read from the Spiritual and secular press, were amusing, if not instructive, as they illustrated that controversy and criticism may have their funny sides as well as the more broad and humorous phases of life. The Doctor promised these, however, to show there was as much as good authority for him and his philosophy, as against him.

To explain the change in his feelings, however, it was necessary to go back to his boyhood, for it now seems the Dr. has been a *medium* "from his youth up." In his twelfth year, he saw the Spirit of his father twice, who gave an outline history of his life, prophetically stating several things that should come to pass. The Dr. however, in his youth and inexperience, made confident of a person, telling him some secrets "of the world unknown," which was confided by this friend to another confidant, and so on, until his *faith* became the gossip of the town, and his conduct and sanity questions for debate.

This petty persecution put an end to his mediumship, (which the Dr. *now* thinks was seeing,) and prevented any further intercourse with his father. Thus ended his first *conscious* communion and intercourse with the inhabitants of the Spirit world. Time passed on, and the Dr. had grown to man's estate, had married, become a professor of religion, and was a public advocate of orthodox theology, believing and teaching the terrors of the law, the eternity of punishment, vicarious atonement, and the final conditions of all, who should die impenitent and unrepentant to the Lord.

While thus believing and teaching, a young lady, a friend and relative of his family, committed *suicide*, because some opposition was made by her relatives "to her marrying the man of her choice."

This, of course, made a great impression on the Dr.'s mind, as he was fully in the belief, the soul of this young woman had gone to the "regions of the damned." While thus sorrowing for her *double* loss, he was one evening surprised, and somewhat terrified by the appearance of her Spirit; the more, as she identified herself, by giving the details of her earth life history, and explaining the causes that prompted her to drown herself.

The Doctor soon became accustomed to the visits of this Spirit, and took a deep interest in her communications, for her explanations evinced an understanding of, and a familiarity with the general laws of the Spiritual world, that naturally tended to correct much of the Doctor's theology.

These and other Spirit manifestations becoming public, his dwelling grew immensely famous as "the haunted house," and he again became a subject of suspicion and persecution. This Spirit, however, ministered the necessary consolation, for she revealed many things to the Doctor, and prophesied of events, which were to be particularized in his experience, and aid in the development of his character. A condition, however, was appended, for he was to be champion of truth, however unpopular it might prove to be, and should he prove himself worthy of this high commission, the Spirits, particularly the Spirit of this young lady, would appear to him no more, while the Doctor remained in the earth sphere, but failing in his duty, she would come to him in "thirty-two years." Imperfect as this outline of the Doctor's Spiritual experience is, there is enough in it to surprise the mind, and invite inquiry, for nearly all who heard the Doctor's lecture were led to ask how could any reasonable mind be seduced into opposition, and developed into a *positive* antagonist, having had so remarkable and extraordinary an experience in Spiritual things—one, too, whose past life, for thirty years, had been modified by the teachings of the Spirits! Indeed, the pretensions of the Doctor on the one hand, and his conduct on the other, naturally tend to mystify the man and the subject, for the explanation given by the Doctor is somewhat difficult of comprehension.

The Doctor says his investigations and experience, as a *psychologist*, led him to ask himself the question, is not my past experience in Spiritual things all phantasy and hallucination? Are not wonderful things forced on the credence of the psychologized subject, as those which characterized his own experiences? These and other questions of a like character, the Doctor asked and answered in the affirmative, all of which tended to and enforced the conclusion that his Spiritual experience was a *delusion* and a dream.

How, then, is it possible to convince the Doctor of the truth of Spirit-intercourse, or place any reliance on his continuing in the Spirit faith? Are questions which the Doctor's explanations and experience have forced on the attention of those who heard the one and know the other. The answer of the Doctor is at hand. Modern facts and new developments from his old Spirit friends, have given him the necessary evidence, which makes his past experience *whole*, and has convinced him of the verity of Spiritualism.

In fact, the Doctor avers that the Spirit of the young lady who committed suicide thirty-two years ago, has appeared to him again, demonstrated her identity, and given other Spiritual manifestations, which excludes the further possibility of doubt, and removes his skepticism forever. The appearance of this Spirit, be it understood, is in fulfillment of the promise that, if he was not faithful, he should see her at the end of thirty-two years.

Much more might be said by way of explanation, but we hope this outline will justly represent the Doctor, and the motives that prompts his acceptance of the Spiritual faith. Still, we wish to remind the reader, that the Doctor's statements are, as yet, mere statements, and can have but a limited influence, until there is some kind of objective and corroborative testimony adduced by the Doctor to warrant a more ready and spontaneous acceptance of his explanation. Not however, because his testimony is not good, but because it is wonderful, perplexing and contradictory, and the Spiritualist owes it to himself, as well as to a rational and consistent philosophy, to see that a mere acceptance of the wonderful, does not constitute the bond of union among the investigators or the advocates of Spiritualism.

And we would respectfully suggest to the Doctor, that he get the necessary testimony to prove the historical truthfulness of those manifestations, he localizes in Bangor and other parts of the State of Maine, as it will prevent skepticism of his motive, statement, and rationality, by those, who may not be prepared to look, with the same allowance and charity on his philosophic crudities, as the Spiritualist will exercise in translating his explanation.

MR. TIFFANY'S LECTURES TO BE PUBLISHED.

The twelve lectures of this gentleman—delivered at the Stuyvesant Institute—having been phonetically reported by Messrs. Graham and Ellinwood, and revised by Mr. Tiffany, are now in the hands of the printer, preparing for press. The understanding is, the work is to progress rapidly, so that by the early part of the Spring the work may be expected. In order to aid progress, and encourage Messrs. Graham and Ellinwood in their enterprise, (they being publishers and proprietors of the work,) many have subscribed for the book, taking one or more copies, at the rate of one dollar and fifty cents each; and we make this notice in hopes many of our readers will send in their names for a like purpose.

We hope so, for the lectures will form a consecutive series of reasonings on the fundamental facts of Spirit-life and Spiritual culture, and cannot fail of suggesting the need of *method* in argument, though they fail in the classification of all the facts, which the providence of history, or the advent of Spiritualism, may present.

Having heard the lectures delivered, we can promise the reader before hand, there is much in them of reasoning, argument and philosophy, to challenge controversy and awaken criticism; for Mr. Tiffany is in the habit of talking "as one having authority." This, however, should only inspire the reader with a disposition to read the work, for the age in which we live needs *positive* thinkers, to bring it back to first principles and make it conscious of its Spiritual neglects and religious apocryphs.

At present we forbear making any criticism of the lectures or the man—for the lectures, being for the most part extempore efforts, very naturally partook of the inaccuracy in language, and the looseness of argument, which more or less characterize the best popular productions. What we have to offer, therefore, of criticism, will be given after we have read the work; as then we will have Mr. Tiffany's final corrections and amendments.

In the meantime, if our friends will send their names and money along, we will see to it that they get the book as soon as possible.

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT.

The popular "Singing Sisters," (the Misses Hall,) of Boston, will give their first Vocal Concert at the Stuyvesant Institute, on Thursday evening, January 24, commencing at half past 7 o'clock. For those receiving the early issue of our paper we make this notice, as we think the proposed Concert worthy the attention of all lovers of music. We think so, having enjoyed good opportunities for knowing the vocal and musical peculiarities of "the Sisters" and hope that their visit to New York may be introductory to that larger field of usefulness, which their gifts and culture alike qualify them to fill. It was our pleasure to know "the Sisters" some five years since, in Boston, when in company with Dr. Cutter, the psychologist, they filled the lecture room of the Tremont Temple, for over two months—singing six nights in the week. The benefits of so protracted an engagement must have been great, in a practical as well as artistic sense; for it not only gave them confidence in their own powers, but a quick insight into, and a ready appreciation of, the wants of the public. Beside this, they have had much Spiritual experience, for one or more of "the Sisters" were mediums, and all of them go into the "trance state," and not unfrequently sing their songs in that condition. The character and style of their music is mostly *ballad*; their selections popular, sentimental and humorous. We hope those of our friends who can, will, by their presence and patronage, encourage them to go forward in "their mission," for music is a great civilizer.

Cards of admission, Twenty-five cents.

Dr. J. B. Dods will deliver his second lecture at the Stuyvesant Institute, on Sunday evening, January 27th. Subject:—"The Philosophy of Spirit-intercourse, as set forth in the Bible."

PREVALENCE OF SPIRITUALISM.—A private correspondent of an intelligent gentleman who has traveled extensively of late in the Western and Middle States, writes: "Spiritualism is in almost every neighborhood. It does not go abroad, proclaiming itself in a loud voice; but visits where it is least expected. I must say that I am astonished to find the subject talked of and investigated by people, who a few years ago would have thought themselves doomed to everlasting perdition, had they dared to manifest even an idle curiosity concerning it. If there is anything that makes one feel that life is worth living for, it is the glorious truths unfolded through Spirit communion.—*Spiritual Universe*."

THE MANIFESTATIONS—A MANY-PHASED ARGUMENT.

It would seem, from the way some persons speak and write of Spiritualism and the Manifestations, that, as yet, the believers in Spirit-intercourse are indebted to the "traps" and "tricks" for their best, if not their only real proof for Spirit Manifestation. For the benefit of such, we select the following facts; as they deepen the significance of the argument, while illustrating the many phases the Manifestations have already given to it.

The two statements are from the Cincinnati *Spiritual Messenger*.

"PROPHETIC DECLARATION.—Early in the month of October, a little girl belonging to a Presbyterian family residing at Clifton, near this city, was visited with a remarkable prophetic impression. She announced to her parents that in two weeks from that day, at nine o'clock in the morning, she should die. It was of course at first regarded by the parents as mere childish foolishness, but they soon perceived that she spoke with solemn earnestness. Her hand was controlled, and under Spirit-influence wrote down, in detail, instructions for her funeral ceremonies, and for the disposition of her little possessions. Embraced in the funeral arrangements was a provision for procuring the services of the Rev. Mr. Giles, a Swedenborgian minister, of whom she had never before heard. She spoke with great composure of her approaching departure to the Spirit-land. At the precise time which had been given, she died, and the family proceeded to comply with the written instructions."

"AN EXTRAORDINARY MEDIUM.—A little girl about ten years old, the daughter of a Methodist preacher at New Albany, Ind., has been developed as a writing medium, of an extraordinary character. She writes communications with both hands at the same time, and upon different subjects, and while thus engaged can also converse with persons upon subjects distinct from either."

"The character of the communications thus written out through her, are entirely foreign to her own thoughts, and above her natural capacity. This presents a new phenomena, and would seem to indicate that the medium is controlled by two different Spirits at the same time. It will defy the powers of the most skillful and ingenious operator of leggendism."

The Editor of the *N. E. Spiritualist*, after quoting the above fact, says: "A similar phase of mediumship was exhibited in the early Spiritual experience of an intelligent gentleman of our acquaintance. Three intelligences would obviously be manifesting themselves at the same moment—1st, the medium himself would be engaged in conversation; 2d, an intelligence purporting to be a departed Spirit would control one hand, to communicate on another topic; and, 3d, another intelligence would control the other hand to write on still another subject, and all at the same time. These cases present facts which those philosophers who rely on a supposed 'dual action of the brain' for explanation of the mental phenomena of mediumship, will find it difficult to dispose of."

Of a widely differing character is the following—The Manifestation being, for the most part, illustrative of the ability of Spirits to operate on and move physical bodies. We copy from the *Spiritual Telegraph* report of a late Conference.

Dr. Hallock said:

"At the commencement of a lecture he was delivering before the Spiritualists of Philadelphia, there was a great deal of Spirit Manifestation, in the form of rappings, &c., which attracted a good deal of notice, and created some little disturbance in the minds of the congregation, so that at one time he was a little annoyed lest due attention would not be paid to what he was saying, and his efforts would be lost if that state of things continued. But he soon forgot his concern and went on with his remarks, and succeeded in entirely fastening the attention of the whole audience upon the subject he was endeavoring to present to their minds; and while, as he believed, every eye and thought in the congregation was directed to him, Mr. Gordon—a well-known medium—who then sat some distance in front of him, when the room was well lighted, rose in the air, without any human aid whatever, till the speaker saw his toe resting upon the top of the back of the seat, and he then swayed partly around from left to right. By this time the eyes and thoughts of the entire congregation were riveted with intense wonder and curiosity upon him, when he sank down to the floor. The manifestation was imperfect on the part of the power that lifted him up, because it was declared by the Spirits that it was their intention to float him over the congregation, and land him on the platform by the side of the speaker, which he (Dr. H.) had no doubt they would have done, had the conditions permitted; but he thought the intense curiosity of the audience was a hindrance to its successful accomplishment. Still it remained a question, how came that man up in the air in that congregation, when no human being could have lifted him up, without being instantly detected in the act? The speaker thought it a phenomenon entirely beyond the sphere of ordinary causes operating in the world; and that the fact of its occurrence in a large assembly added significance to it. Its effect, instead of abstracting the attention of the audience from the lecture, tended to increase their interest in it; and, said the speaker, 'I think I may say that I never was in an assembly of men where so much serene joy and unanimity existed, as was manifested there last Sunday afternoon. They felt that it was good for them to be there. I cannot describe the occasion in words.'"

TESTING THE SPIRITS.

Although extreme skepticism is as offensive to good taste, as it is destructive to progress, still, where investigation is recognized and invited, tests must be accepted however varied or seemingly angular their phases.

We do not mean by this, that the inquirer shall attempt the *improbable*, or torture his good sense, in order to perplex the Spirits; or make "the communion of saints" an impossibility—but that in all candor, he will use such means and methods as shall save him from delusion, and prevent others from collusion. So far "test" is both necessary and proper, for it restrains both the investigator and the medium, while leaving the "balance of power" with the Spirit. We offer these reflections as introductory to the following from the *New Church Herald*; as the "tests" suggested, if acted on, must annihilate the *psychological* theory so popular with some in and out of the Swedenborgian Church. They will also prevent imposition.

The writer says: "Let the Spirits look or unlock a door, or wind up a clock, when the key is either destroyed or left with a reliable person at a distant place; or provide a table for the purpose, and let it be newly painted, or covered with tar, or molasses, so that if touched by any present it may distinctly leave the marks upon the hands or clothes. Then let the Spirits break it! Some such experiments as these must be surely satisfactory and convincing, one way or the other, and such as the earnest advocates of this doctrine ought not to be backward in presenting."

TWO PICTURES CONTRASTED.

The lady who permitted me to cut the first picture from a paper in her possession, will understand this letter is addressed to her.

MELANCHOLY PRESENTMENT OF DEATH BY A YOUNG LADY OF KINDERHOOK, N. Y., AND ITS SAD FULFILLMENT.—We have to record a most melancholy instance of the power of hallucination over the mind and health of a highly respectable and intelligent young lady of Kinderhook, in this State, who, some two years since, while in the enjoyment of robust health, was visited one night at her bedside—as she affirmed at the time—by an apparition, which in solemn accents informed her that at the age of eighteen she would be an inhabitant of another and a better world. She made the incident known to her mother, who vainly endeavored to erase the circumstance from the mind of her daughter by treating it as the hallucination of a dream. The daughter, however, avowed that she was in possession of her faculties and wide awake at the time of receiving her spiritual visitor; and such was the effect it had upon her mind that from a girl, full of life and glee, she became thoughtful and reserved, and gradually sank under its depressing influence, pining gradually, until recently she became a tenant of the graveyard just as she was entering upon her eighteenth year.—*Kinderhook Rough Notes*.

I would like to know upon what authority the *Kinderhook Rough Notes* locates the young lady in a "graveyard." As a "tenant," it might be useful and instructive to the editor of that paper to call on the young lady, and learn the nature of the occupations and amusements by which she whiles away the time in a graveyard, in expectation of a material resurrection of flesh and bones. But I will present another picture, as a contrast to the first.

"And the Angel said unto her, fear not Mary, for thou hast found favor with God."

"And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and call his name Jesus."

We have a right to infer that Mary at the time of this announcement was in "robust health." Moreover, if questioned on the subject, she would have avowed, doubtless, "that she was in possession of her faculties and wide awake at the time of receiving her spiritual visitor." Doubtless, also, Mary "became thoughtful and reserved," and such was "the power of hallucination over the mind and health of a highly respectable and intelligent young lady," that she actually gave birth to a son, as her Spiritual visitor had predicted.

My esteemed friend, permit me to request of you a rigid comparison of the two pictures, that you may, if possible, detect a difference or a similarity in the agency, the announcement, and the fulfillment. The second picture in the order of presentation, as you perceive, was drawn long ago, among a people claiming to be far in advance of all the rest of the world in all that pertains to Spirituality, and a knowledge of the true God; yet the facts therein set forth were rejected by that highly favored people, and by their descendants, unto this day. The Jewish Church, first established as a Spiritual basis, had degenerated into mere formalism, and the evidences of its divine origin were no longer practical facts.

The first picture presented was drawn in the present age, among a people who claim a position no less exalted among the nations of the earth. We have a Church making the same claims to a divine origin, attested by remarkable Spiritual revelations; yet this same Church and same people reject facts every way analogous to those upon which their faith is based.

In both cases the people, under the rule of an intolerant priesthood, are blinded to the present, forbidden the future, and turned back upon the mystified past.

To an unprejudiced mind, there is a striking parallelism between the ancient Jewish and modern Christian churches. Each had its birth in stupendous miracles, and each, after passing through fiery ordeals, fell down and worshipped a golden calf. Each claims to be the only true revelation from God, and each claims to possess all necessary knowledge in matters of salvation.

I am not writing, my friend, with the view of converting you to my way of thinking. In your present position, it would be as much as your happiness is worth to ask for any more than your Church sees fit to give. It is not possible, at present, for you to turn from the beaten path without hazarding the loss of your most valued friends. But I have a motive. I know that the seeds of Truth, wherever planted, will spring and bear fruit some time in the future. I know that your highly sensitive and Spiritual nature is not fed, as it might be, from the fountain of Truth. You are not half as happy as a Christian has a right to be. Your mind is fully prepared for knowledge; it now lives on faith. This knowledge can be obtained without incurring the ban of popular opinion, for you are a medium of a high order.

In the only conversation we ever had on the subject of Spiritualism, I believe I met all your objections against it, but one. That one was, that we had no right to pry into the future.

The answer to that objection is found in Paul's epistle to the Philippians. Paul says: "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."

Now, it is well known that the pretended followers of Paul, in our day, pursue a reverse course. But, as respects your individual case, the time is near when you will look the other way. My motive for writing to you is to disturb the waters, and leave the rest to those bright beings that hover around you. You are not writing Spiritual poetry for nothing. The mind that can be made the channel for such effusions as have passed through your mind, cannot always wear the rusty shackles of creed and custom. Were it expedient, I would be glad to have you draw up a list of objections to the current phenomena, and forward it to my address. I will undertake to answer you by quotations from the New Testament. I give you the preference over your minister, because your talent is infinitely above his. There is an advantage to be derived from a discussion with one who is capable of giving ideas in exchange for ideas.

Allow me to refer you to a circumstance. You had a friend gifted with a rare talent of poetry. She passed away from earth, and subsequently, when ever your soul was sad and sorrowful, the thought of her would suddenly illuminate your mind to give utterance to your choicest poetic gems. That very circumstance is worthy of consideration. What was it that made your mind so prolific of sweet sentences, with scarcely an effort? Was it sorrow, or was it an unbidden thought of a dead person's? Is poetry something or nothing? If something, it must have something for its source, and that something must be intelligent. Now, thinking of your departed friend did not produce the poetry; but it is not possible that you might have attributed her Spirit to you by your need of sympathy? And at such a moment, when your receptive organs were exquisitely tender, is it not possible that your angel friend may have been the author—yourself but the instrument, of that poetry, which you find yourself able to write only on particular occasions? Is not there a philosophy in it that you have not yet fathomed? Think of it.

S. M. PETERS.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

NO. XXIV.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Jan. 21, 1886.

BROTHER TOOHEY.—Since writing my last epistle, I have had a reward for my labors above all price; the full value of which I feel cannot be estimated, till I look upon its fruition in the light of eternity. Men on earth may labor and toil to lay up for themselves riches and honors upon earth; but give me my reward in the salvation of my brother man from the slavery of Superstition and Error, and in beholding their freedom and joy in the future life. What are the toys of earth in comparison with those riches and honors, imperishable, after which I most ardently aspire?

While these thoughts are flowing from my pen, I cannot help adverting to the pitiable condition of those who, having received the truths of Spiritualism, are afraid to stand forward and confess them before men! Surely, the Angels of God must feel ashamed of the conduct of such; and bitterly will they reflect on their own inconsistency and infidelity to the cause of Truth, when they pass away from earth into that condition of life, where every thought shall be clearly read, and where they will feel the effects of all the acts of their earth-life, with that self-condemnation which most of necessity follow. Alas! alas! How have the anathemas of the pulpit, in all ages, hindered the progress of mind!

Oh, brethren and sister! believers in Spiritual Truth—*Awake! arise! be honest! be fearless!* and do work in accordance with that which thou feelest to be just; and thy reward is sure, and ever with thee. I know not why I have been led to write thus; yet I feel that there is a purpose, which will be fulfilled.

On Tuesday evening of last week, by invitation, I accompanied a number of Spiritualists, (about thirty,) on a sleigh ride to Warren. It was a splendid evening, and we all enjoyed the trip exceedingly. On our arrival there was, first, the supper, which was all arranged under the auspices of Bros. Osborn and Knowles. The repast was of fowls with sundry fixings, on temperance principles—Nature's nectar, from the crystal fount, being the principal beverage. Creature comforts are well in their place, but these are only for the physical. Our Spiritual needs had also to be supplied, and to these necessities our good sister Harriet F. Huntley most abundantly administered, being controlled by a Spirit-friend to speak to us at considerable length. And while some were thus feasting their minds, others were enjoying themselves in another room in the mazes of the dance. About 12 P. M., we again packed ourselves into the sleigh, and returned in high spirits to our respective homes. We felt as a band of brothers and sisters, and nothing occurred to mar the pleasure of the trip.

Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings, I spent in Pawtucket—that hard place, where a month before I could not find a foothold. On this visit I occupied the Town Hall, which was capable of seating about three hundred, which was well filled each evening by a most profoundly attentive audience. The greatest interest was evinced; and I hope the ground has been effectually broken up to be further cultivated by those who may follow after. Let not the laborers forget that the field is open in Pawtucket. I was kindly entertained by Brother W. Earls; and it will be well for any that may desire to visit that place, to direct their letters to him. Money, however, must not be their object; for the number of Spiritualists, at present, are but few.

I have spoken of Mrs. Huntley; this lady resides in Paper Mill Village, N. H. She is well controlled, and I doubt not in the future will make a mark as a public medium. She is one of those few female media, who will go forth to labor wherever she is required, whether among rich or poor, without regard to the amount of remuneration, receiving that which the brethren may feel able to contribute toward her expenses. I feel anxious that this sister should have a hearing in your city, being satisfied that she will be appreciated amongst you. I would also recommend her to the attention of Spiritualists generally who may need the occasional services of a speaking medium. She may be addressed at her residence as above. This lady followed me in Pawtucket, with two lectures spoken from the interior, on the following Sunday, which were delivered to overflowing audiences, and now I understand that the people are "asking for more."

Yesterday, I delivered two lectures in this city, to very attentive audiences, though not so numerous as I had hoped. Several whom I had hoped to see, were not present. I suppose they had sufficient reasons, but I wish to suggest to them, that there is nothing more distressing to the feelings of a laborer in this cause, than to feel himself unsupported by those who should be foremost in the ranks. The too wet, or too dry, too hot or too cold, sounds too much like the excuses of the sectarian, and should not fall from the lips of the Spiritualist, as a mere excuse.

Next Sunday, I shall again lecture in this city, in Amity Hall, afternoon and evening, and I expect, the following Sunday in Worcester. My friends will please direct accordingly.

For Truth and Humanity, JOHN MATHEW.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN A SPIRIT-FRANKIST.

The distinction so often made and insisted on between ancient and modern Spiritualism, however absurd it may appear to the mind of large, genial and universal sympathies, has been rendered necessary, by the issues of the sectarian, for while he bequeaths the gift of inspiration and the boon of "Revelation" to the past, he pronounces imposture and delusion on all, who recognize these unfoldings of the Infinite as characteristic of the present.

Should the Spiritualist, therefore, insist in keeping and making the distinction final, there will be a line of demarcation drawn between the souls of men, which must be as fatal to progress and the true harmonization of the race, as the obstinacy of the Jew, the intolerance of the Romanist, and the dogmatism of the Churchman have been pernicious to the world's culture. There may be danger in this direction, for it has been aptly said:

"In pride, in reasoning pride our error lies: All quit their sphere and rush into the skies, Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, Men would be angels, angels would be Gods."

The true Spiritualist, however, will see the necessity of avoiding all *extremism*, since isolations, exclusions and antagonisms have been the cause of most of our social evils, while ministering to, and fostering Spiritual pride and all kinds of mental excesses. And to help progress in this direction, we republish the following letter of Benjamin Franklin, as its good sense and modesty, as well as rational appreciation of the general Providence of God, cannot but interest and instruct the reader, if perused with a desire to know the truth.—*Ed. Ch. Sp.*

PHILADELPHIA, June 6, 1753.

DEAR SIR: I received your kind letter of the 2d

instant, and am glad to hear that you increase in strength. I hope you will continue mending until you recover your former health and firmness. Let me know whether you still use the cold bath, and what effect it has. As to the kindness you mention, I wish it could have been of more service to you; but if it had, the only thanks I should desire are that you would always be ready to serve any other person that may need your assistance; and so let good offices go round, for mankind are all of a family. For my own part, when I am employed in serving others, I do not look upon myself as conferring favors, but pay debts. In my travels, and since my settlement, I have received much kindness from men to whom I shall never have an opportunity of making the least direct return; and numberless mercies from God, who is infinitely above being benefited by our services. These kindnesses, from men, I can therefore, only return to their fellow men; and I can only show gratitude to God by a readiness to help his other children, and my brethren, for I do not think that thanks and compliments, though repeated weekly, can discharge our real obligations to each other, and much less to our Creator. We will see by my notion of good works, that I am far from expecting heaven by them. By heaven, we understand a place of happiness infinite in degree and endless in duration. I can do nothing to deserve such a reward. He that for giving a draught of water to a thirsty person, should expect to be paid with a good plantation, would be modest in his demands, compared with those who think they deserve heaven for the little good they do on earth. Even the mixed imperfect pleasures we enjoy in this world, are rather from God's goodness than our merit; how much more so the happiness of heaven? For my own part, I have not the vanity to think I deserve it; but content myself in submitting to the disposal of that God, who made me, and whose Fatherly goodness I may well confide in; but he will never make me miserable, and the afflictions I may at any time suffer, may tend to my benefit. The *faith* you mention has, doubtless, its use in the world. I do not desire to see it diminished, nor would I endeavor to lessen it in any man; but I wish it were more productive of good works than I have generally seen it. I mean real good works; works of kindness, charity, mercy and public spirit; not holiday-keeping, sermon reading or hearing, performing church ceremonies, or making long prayers, filled with flatteries and compliments, despised even by wise men, and much less capable of pleasing the Deity. The worship of God is a duty; the hearing and reading of sermons may be useful; but if men rest in hearing and praying, as too many do, it is as if a tree should value itself on being watered and putting forth leaves though it never produced any fruit.

Your great Master thought much less of these outward appearances and professions than many of his modern disciples. He preferred the *deeds* of the word to the mere *hearers*; the son that seemingly refused to obey his father, and yet performed his commands, to him that professed his readiness, but neglected the work; the heretical but charitable Samaritan, to the uncharitable though orthodox priest and sanctified Levite; and those who gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, maintained the naked, entertainment to the stranger, and relief to the sick, though they never heard of his name, he declares shall in the last day be accepted: while those who cry Lord! Lord! who value themselves upon their faith, though great enough to perform miracles, but have neglected good works, shall be rejected. He professed that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance; which implied his modest opinion that there were some in his time so good that they need not hear even his preaching for improvement; but, nowadays, we have scarce a little person that does not think it the duty of every man within his reach to sit under his petty ministrations, and that whoever omits them offends God.

B. FRANKLIN.

THE TRUE LIFE.

Much as has been said and written upon this theme, it cannot but be a matter of the deepest regret to the sincere and earnest thinker, that in the *glaring light* of the *Nineteenth Century*, with all the experience of the *Past* and the Inspiration of the *Present*, shining in upon it, that man has accomplished so little for his own Spiritual needs; which as *Spiritual Being* he must understand before he can be truly happy.

Men now as in times past who have been highly favored in their mental and physical conditions, seem (by their actions) to say, to their more humble, and (on the sensuous plane), less fortunate brethren, look at me! I am better than thou—Take for instance, the individual whose desire for fame lies in his worldly possessions, and who, being been nursed in the *lap of luxury*, is apt to feel that he is made up of finer material than the poor son of toil, who has to labor for a scanty pittance, and upon whom he looks with supercilious contempt. Again, there is the man who is considered thrifty, who by a series of fortunate speculations, has amassed riches. He may have occasionally driven a sharp bargain, and got the better of others by his shrewdness, as the *Business World* term it.—Such an one will condescend to aid those whom he naturally looks down upon as wanting in what he terms *business enterprise*, by giving advice, (which is about all he ever does give.) He will talk about economy, thrift, &c., all the time holding himself up as an illustrious example, worthy of all imitation. Then we have the man who seeks to lord it over his fellow by virtue of his intellectual superiority, one who in his own perverted judgment is *egotistic*, that he is not willing others should entertain an idea at variance with his own peculiar dogma. Then there is the *sectarian zealot*, who while professing charity to other sects, aye, to the whole world, shows but too plainly in his life a deep rooted prejudice consigning all who honestly differ from him in matters of religion to endless torment. Thus may be traced all existing evils, to the partial and selfish development of the mind of man, in his individual and social condition, and inasmuch as organizations whether *Social, Religious, or Political*, must partake of the character of those composing them, should it be a matter of surprise that so many evils exist, or that Governments and Churches become corrupt.

Is it not clearly then every man's duty to cast about him and see if he has not been pursuing a phantom, for however fortunate he may have been in obtaining *wealth, honor and renown*, there is still an aching void caused by the unsatisfied wants of his Spiritual nature.

The promised Millennial day can never in the nature of things dawn upon our world, until Earth's children are found earnestly laboring for its consummation. When by virtue of this preparedness of spirit, the mind is fitted to enter into rapport with the teachings of the *Godlike Nature*, then will the soul be influenced by higher incentives, to nobler deeds, becoming unfolded in its harmonious relations, then and not till then, may we look with

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THE POETRY OF EARTH.

The gift of poetry is a glorious gift, fitted to unveil the secret analogies of beauty on earth, and to bring kindred images from all parts of nature, to heighten the images which they reveal—and our fair correspondent has but swept her hand across the "Eolian strings of nature, and disclosed to us its melodious music, trembling on leaf and flower, in the water's flow and the wild bird's song, with artless effect, in the following beautiful piece:

It is written on mountain, and field, and dale,
On the "wet" trembling in the vale,
In the leafy rustle of the forest dim—
It is heard in the wild-bird's evening hymn.

It is chanted in melody, soft and low,
Through the lonely dell where the waters flow:
In the violets' tender eyes of blue,—
It is glistering in the morning dew.

The winds are breathing it o'er the sea,—
It is heard in the hum of the wandering bee,
As he lingers awhile, with his little band,
On the lilacs' cheek, with "soft winds' fann'd."

Far in the depths of the dark blue sea,
Where the waves are sighing mournfully,
Through the branching coral and dark sea-weed,
It is written there, where no eye can read.

In autumn, 'tis seen in the crimson leaf,
In the fading glow of the summer brief,—
In the snow-flake, too—in the frost-work bright,
On each twig gleams a pearl in the ruby light.

Its music in gentle words we hear,—
It is seen in the smile and the falling tear,—
In the loving eyes that are meeting thine:
It is traced by the hand that is Divine.

ADELLE.

CHILDREN GOING TO REST.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

The day is gone. The sun hath said
Farwell, with silent tongue,
And hid on his western bed.
With golden curtains hung,
But ere we little children creep,
All tired with play, to pleasant sleep;
We'll take our leave, with kisses bright,
And bid the baby dear,—good night.

Good-night, ye blessed stars that keep
Your watch around our rest—
And birds that told the way to sleep,
Within your quiet nest.
Good-night, green trees, beneath whose shade
Our pretty wild-flowers wreaths we made—
And singing brook, and blossom bright,
And every lovely thing,—good-night.

Mother! we turn to thee the last,
Sweet words we still would say;
See your kind hand in ours is fast,—
Please, come and hear us pray,
Yes, see us on our pillow laid,
And then at midnight's darkest shade,
The whispers of our dream shall be
Of angel visitants and thee.

GEM.

There's not a heath, however rude,
But hath some little flower
To brighten up its solitude,
And scent the evening hour.
There's not a heart, however cast
By grief and sorrow down,
But hath some memory of the past
To love and call its own.

THE BIBLE—ITS OLD VERSIONS AND NEW TRANSLATIONS.

We republish the following extracts from the N. Y. *Daily Times*, as it outlines the history of the translations of the Bible—and points out the changes proposed, and yet to be made in texts of the Testaments. It is necessary that the *Christian Spiritualist* keep himself informed of these changes—as they prove progress and suggest the necessity for "light, more light still." It will be perceived by the reader that the changes proposed in the forthcoming translation, are generally on the side of good sense, and therefore promise a harmonic tendency for the future, whatever they may do for this generation. This is *invaluable*, since the admission, that "twenty-four thousand variations" were found in comparing "six copies" of the Bible—is rather humiliating to those textual dogmatists and Biblical pugilists, who have been dealing "damnation round the land," to all who could not reconcile verbal differences or believe in "plenary inspiration." At the same time, a knowledge of the patient labors of these men now correcting the text, &c. of the Scriptures will go far, in vindication of their sincerity and truthfulness. We bespeak for the article an attentive reading.—*Ed. Ch. Spl.*

It is unnecessary at this day to emphasize the intrinsic value of the Bible. To the Christian, the political economist, and the *literateur*, its claims to a high preeminence among books admit of no doubt. Next to its authenticity, the question evidently first in importance is that of its essential identity, or the fidelity of our common translations to the original.

EARLY ENGLISH VERSIONS.

The version known as the Latin Vulgate was chiefly prepared by Jerome under the supervision of a Bishop of Rome, about the close of the Fourth Century. With slight variations, this is the Roman Catholic Bible as at present used.

The first translation of the Bible into English worth speaking of, was that of WICKLIFFE, about the year 1380. This was made from the Latin Vulgate—he being ignorant of the Greek and Hebrew—but was not printed, as that art had not then been invented. TYNDALE's translation from the original languages followed, and was published between the years 1526 and 1537. This was a most able and faithful version, and has been very little improved upon by those which have succeeded it.

The entire English Bible was first printed at Zurich in 1535, by COVERDALE; it was taken from the Dutch and Latin. Besides the versions known as MATTHEWS' Bible, and CRANMER'S Great Bible, published in 1539 and 1537 respectively, the Geneva Bible (prepared by English reformers while living in exile at Geneva) was printed in 1560. This was the first version in any language that was broken up into verses. The Bishops' Bible appeared in 1568, having been prepared under the supervision of the Church of England; it was subsequently made the basis of our present version.

In 1604, KING JAMES I. of England, in obedience to general request, commissioned forty-seven learned men of the Universities to undertake the work of making a new version of the Holy Scriptures, subject to the royal sanction. Seven eminent divines were afterwards added—making fifty-four in all—to confer with the rest, and supervise their labors. In 1611, a period of seven years from its inception, the work was finally completed, and received the approbation of the King. Although the Bishops' Bible was taken as the groundwork of this version, the original languages were diligently examined with the aid of all the critical learning of that period.

Our present version of the Holy Writ is materially the same as that of the King James translators, with the exception of natural changes in orthography and the correction of typographical errors. Since 1611 several revisions have been made by competent authority, for the purpose mainly of correcting errors of the press. By far the most complete of these was the revision prepared by Dr. BLANNEY, of Oxford, in 1767. This has ever since

been regarded as a standard, and most subsequent editions have been conformed to it down to the present day.

DISCREPANCIES.

To persons not conversant with the subject it would appear at first thought that all the editions of the Bible that are referred to the same standard must necessarily be *Jac similes* of each other. So far from this being the case, it is found that they not only exhibit discrepancies among themselves, but are even unlike the standard. The variations spoken of are exclusively typographical errors.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY'S NEW VERSION.

In view of this fact the American Bible Society, in 1847, resolved to collate copies of several prominent editions published in this country and England, in order to obtain as perfect a copy as the nature of the case admitted. Rev. Mr. McLANE, then pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Williamsburg, was selected to perform the work under the superintendence of a Committee made up of the following gentlemen: Gardiner Spring, Thomas Cook, Samuel H. Turner, Edward Robinson, Thomas E. Vermilye, John McClintock and Richard S. Storrs, Jr. In 1851 the Committee reported its labors completed, and the same was approved by the Board of Managers. The changes introduced by the work of collation were confined to *orthography, punctuation, words in italics, and capital letters*. Copies of six different editions were used to obtain this result, viz.: the four authorized editions published in England, the King James version of 1611, and one of the American Bible Society's editions. The plan adopted in general was to compare the six different copies, and wherever the American copy differed from one or more of the others, the reading of the majority was followed.

In the course of his work, the collator found about *twenty-four thousand* variations among the six copies compared, solely in the text and punctuation. Yet, it is said, of all this great number there is not one which mars the integrity of the text, or affects any doctrine or precept of the Bible. Most persons must be at a loss to imagine how such a vast number of discrepancies should continue to exist among the current editions of the Bible, despite all ordinary care and effort to remove them. But when it is taken into account that the printing of Bibles is carried on in Great Britain at four different places, and in this country entirely *ad libitum*, it must be regarded as beyond the power of human skill, even with the aid of stereotype plates, to prevent the occasional occurrence of minor errors and variations, arising sometimes from accident, and sometimes from the inadvertence of proof readers. Along with all these too there is certainly the possibility that some slight oversight may have remained uncorrected throughout all the editions even from the very beginning. The revised copy printed by the Bible Society in 1851, and called the Octavo Reference Bible, is now the standard to which all future editions published by that Society will be conformed.

The American Bible Society, which was formed in 1816, had, from the first, given more or less attention and aid to translations of the Scriptures into other languages, though its chief object was the circulation of a pure English version. Previous to 1855, donations had been contributed in behalf of translations into several of the Asiatic tongues, by Baptist missionaries, in which the various renderings recognized by their creed were retained. But in that year other counsels prevailed, and an application for assistance in printing the Bengali New Testament was declined, except on condition that the text should be conformed to the King James' version. The Greek word *baptizo* was the magnitudinous bone of contention in the present instance, and has continued to be such up to the present time.

CHANGES INTRODUCED.

Baptizo will doubtless be rendered by the word *immerse*. The new versionists allege that "every classic Greek work extant, in which the term is found, employs it in this sense. There are no circumstances accompanying its use in the Sacred Scriptures, that favor any other signification. The best philologists, both English and German, acknowledge this to be the proper meaning. Neither in the word nor in its cognates, whether in classic or Scripture Greek, is to be found the semblance of authority for *sprinkling* or *pouring*. The practice of immersion, for many centuries after Christ and his apostles had established it, was universally prevalent among Christians."

To *paschos*, as found in Acts 12: 4, will be translated the *paschal* instead of "Easter."

Episcopos will be rendered *overseer* in place of "bishop."

The words used to designate the third person of the Trinity, will read Holy *Spirit*, instead of Holy "Ghost."

The names of persons occurring both in the Old and New Testaments will be spelt uniformly, thus: Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, for "Ozee," "Jeremy," "Easias."

To *Zoa*, in the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation, will be rendered *living creatures*, instead of "beasts."

The Geneva Bible thus construes a part of Matthew 5: 29: "If thy right eye cause thee to offend," but the common version has: "If thy right eye offend thee," "which," it is maintained, "in the modern acceptance of the terms, is a together different from the original *skandalizei*, make thee stumble, that is fall into sin."

In two places, Acts 7: 45, and Hebrews 4: 8, Jesus is put for *Joshua*.

In Matthew 23: 24, it is alleged that "a typographical error, by which 'at' is used for *out*, is retained and republished in almost every edition of the authorized version. No other version has it. WICKLIFFE, TYNDALE, COVERDALE, MATTHEW, the Geneva, and even the Latin Vulgate, and the Romish translations from it, all give the idea indicated by the Greek, of *straining* or *cleansing out* not *straining* at a gnat."

It is said that in the common New Testament version, "the word 'hell' is used to translate two distinct Greek words, and thus confounds the difference between the grave, or the place of departed Spirits, and eternal perdition."

Also, "the word 'devil' is made to represent two very different words in the original, making no distinction between the Arch Deceiver, the 'Prince of the power of the air,' and his emissaries, evil Spirits."

In the first verse of the first chapter of Second Peter, the following words occur: *Tou theou henou kai Soterou Jesou Christou*. The King James Bible translates "of God and our Savior Jesus Christ." The New Version has it: "of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." If the latter reading be correct, it seems to be of considerable importance as furnishing additional evidence in favor of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

In Luke 18: 16, the common version says:—"Suffer the little children to come unto me."

In Acts 19: 12, the twelve disciples are represented as saying, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," on this passage the new versionists remark: "This rendering

conveys a false sense, and does not express the mind of God in the original. The meaning is, we have not so much as heard whether the Holy Spirit is yet given. They had heard of the promise of the gifts of the Spirit, but had not heard of its accomplishment; the transactions of the Day of Pentecost being, as yet, unknown to them."

In Genesis, we read as follows: "And God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth, in the open firmament of Heaven." The Bible Unionists say: "From this reading, it would appear that the fowls, as well as the fishes were formed out of the water; but in chap. 2: 19, it is said, 'out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the earth and every fowl of the air.' The true rendering undoubtedly is: 'And let the fowl fly above the earth, on the face of the firmament of Heaven.'"

Again, our present version has it, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made." Now the new versionists: "The work of creation was evidently completed on the sixth day, and the seventh was devoted to rest. It should, therefore, have been translated, 'On the seventh day God had ended his work.' In like manner there are hundreds of passages where the imperfect should be rendered by the perfect tense."

Once more, in Gen. 4: 15: "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain." It is claimed that "the true rendering should be, 'The Lord gave or appointed a sign to Cain.' The original signifies a sign, token, memorial; never anything like a visible brand, mark or stigma affixed to the person. The meaning is, the Lord notified or certified Cain that he should not be injured."

Besides the foregoing, many other changes will be introduced in the new version, such as not italicizing words, and substituting modern words and phrases for those which have become obsolete:—thus, *plucking* for "earing," *living* for "quick," *servant* for "wench," *purse* for "ensue." Also, more current terms will be used for such as "God forbid," "would to God," "he wist not," "most straitest," "very strictest," &c.

SPIRIT-INTERCOURSE AND GUARDIANSHIP.

A writer in the *Christian Freeman*, makes selection of the following statements, favoring Spirit intercourse, that he may the better state his objections to the theory. We thank him for the selections, and will be equally prompt to thank him for his "objections," should this amount to a "point." The first statement is from the Rev. Mr. Barrett. "According to Swedenborg, there is a most intimate connection between the inhabitants of the Spiritual and those of the natural world. He tells us that the Spiritual world is not so far removed from the natural, as to space, but is within it, as the soul is within the body. Consequently there is a reciprocal influence and mutual dependence of the two worlds upon each other, like that existing between the soul and the body; and again the natural re-acts upon the soul. While men are living in this world, they are all, as to their Spirits, intimately associated with Spirits in the other world. If this were not the case, we should have no power to will or think. Swedenborg says that man cannot think the least thing without Spirits adjoined to him, and that his Spirit life depends on it."

"We are aware that the mass of professing Christians at the present day would look upon such a sentiment as this, as something fanciful, visionary, or even superstitious; for the prevalent notions respecting the Spiritual world are extremely vague and ill-defined. Most persons seem to regard it as a shadowy and unreal world, and to think of the soul itself as a kind of formless, ethereal, unsubstantial vapor. Indeed, we find almost everywhere throughout Christendom a deep-rooted skepticism in regard to the reality of a Spiritual world, or the existence of angels or Spirits. It has come to be regarded by the multitude as a mark of wisdom to deny the reality of everything not cognizable by the natural senses, and to treat the belief in the existence of Spirits, and of their influence upon men, as a silly superstition. Such is the gross sensualism in which the minds of men in Christendom are immersed, that they have but little faith in the reality and existence of anything above the sphere of nature. As it is written,—'When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on earth?'"

"But there ever have been persons in all ages of the world who have believed that there are Spirits invisible to the natural eye, yet intimately present with men, and exerting an influence upon them for good or evil. Thus the belief in the presence of the Spiritual world, and its intimate connection and sympathy with the natural world has never at any time completely died out. And it is worthy of remark that those with whom this belief has been the strongest, have usually been among the purest and best of men. Such was evidently the belief of the great Milton; for he says: 'Millions of Spiritual creatures walk the earth Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.'"

"And the poet Spencer says: 'And is there heaven in heaven? And is there lore In heavenly Spirits to these creatures base That may compass them of their evils move? There are else much more wretched were the case Of men than beasts. But oh! the exceeding grace Of highest God! that loves his creatures so, And all His work with mercy doth embrace, That blessed angels He sends to aid and fro, To serve to wicked man—to serve his wicked foe.'"

"Sir Walter Scott also says, in his work on Demonology and Witchcraft, that there are many millions of Spirits who have become invisible to mortals, but who 'are not, it may be supposed, indifferent to the affairs of mortality, perhaps not incapable of influencing them.'"

"Our own Washington Irving, too, though he regards the belief as a superstition, says: 'It is a sublime and beautiful doctrine, inculcated by the early fathers, that there are guardian angels appointed to watch over cities and nations, to take care of good men and to guard and guide the steps of helpless infancy.' And he further adds: 'What could be more consoling than the idea that the souls of those whom we once loved were permitted to return and watch over our pillows when we slept, keeping a vigil over our most helpless hours? that beauty and innocence, which had languished into the tomb, yet smiled unseen around us, revealing themselves in those blest dreams wherein we live over again the hours of past endearments? A belief of this kind would, I think, be a new incentive to virtue, rendering us circumspect even in our most secret moments, from the idea that those we once loved and honored were invisible witnesses of all our actions. Place the superstition in this light, and I confess I should like to be a believer in it.'"

"I opened a little volume of poems the other day, published about two years ago in Boston, and from the pen of a lady of more than ordinary elevation of thought, and in some consoling stanzas addressed to a 'Widowed Friend,' I found the following lines:

'Oh! not alone! Oh! not alone!
Her Spirit hovers near,
With all its deep, undying love,
Thy darkest hours to cheer.

An angel clothed in garments white,
She moved at thy side;
Youthful, and beautiful as when
She first became thy bride.

Angels around our daily paths
Their blessed influence shed;
These angels are our dearly loved,
Our ne'er forgotten dead."

"I cut from a newspaper not long ago some lines written by a gentleman who had lately been called to mourn the loss of a wife and two children.—They were addressed to his wife in the Spirit land, and were remarkable for the cheerful, faithful faith, and pious trust, which they indicated in the writer's mind. The following are among them:

'And now with both the children dear,
Thou'rt dwelling in the Spirit land—
And oftentimes I must hear
Sweet music from that happy band.

And sometimes, too I know I feel
Thy heavenly influence round me thrown;
Such thoughts will o'er my Spirit steal,
And tell me then I'm not alone."

RECEPTION OF A NEW-COMER INTO THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

Extract of a Letter from Mrs. D. N. Burnham, of Chicago, after the Removal of her Sister to the Spiritual World.

At first, when I arrived at my sister's home, and found that she had already gone to the Spiritual world, it seemed dark and sad that I should never see her again in this world; but this morning all the darkness and sadness is dispelled, the beautiful truths of the New Church faith have risen in the heaven of my mind, and dissipated the earth-clouds that had gathered over it. This morning all is bright and clear. I felt, on first awaking, that she had put on a new robe of white this morning, because she had received in her understanding a new truth of inner spiritual life; and as she looked out of the great east window of the new home she occupied, she saw a bright and beautiful maiden approach her, and present to her a cluster of roses and flowers—such flowers as bloom only in the Spiritual world. And she asked her why she brought to her such sweet flowers. And the maiden looked up into her face with a sweet, truthful smile, and said: "First, because I perceived that you had recently come to this beautiful world we live in; and secondly, I was told by one who has been here much longer than I have, that you were a relative, even a sister, of my mother on earth; for I came when I was a young infant to live in this world; and if I had not been instructed by the angels who had the care of me in my youthful days, I should never have known that I had parents and friends, or even that I had been born in the outward world; for when very young children come to live and grow up in this world, they know not otherwise than that they had always lived here, until informed by their good angels, who love them and take care of them. And now that I know you are newly come here to reside with us, I wish to introduce you to others that were members of the same family on earth, and we will talk together of the goodness of the Lord, our Heavenly Father, in preparing such a beautiful world for us to dwell in."

As they stepped out lightly into the glorious sunshine, they perceived a large lawn stretching away in the distance, lined with noble trees laden with rich, heavenly fruit. Under some of them children played and lambs grazed; on the hedges were singing birds, while a bright river rolled beside it. Altogether it was the most beautiful scene that the eyes of the new-born spirit ever rested upon; and the companion of the maiden said that it was true and pleasant to be so, and wondered within herself that she had not believed it more fully while she lived in the outer world.

From the Chicago Journal.

EARTH AND HEAVEN.

BY MISS E. E. LACKTON.

Who that has outlived the sunny days of childhood, and gone forth into the world's broad arena, full of hope, of ambition and enthusiasm, feeling strong and courageous to do battle with opposing influences, has not found his steps faltering, his ardor abating, long ere he has reached the noon-tide of life. He may have taken as his motto the soul-inspiring words of one of our gifted poets, in his noble "Psalms of Life."

"Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust thou returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."

And girding himself for the contest, eagerly started in the race, only to find himself baffled at every point, disappointed in every project. Pleasure lures her votaries with winning words and beautiful visions; but a few remains for him who obeys her bidding, in defiance of the voice of God and the whisperings of conscience.

Wealth, if gained, must be obtained at the sacrifice of home influence and fire-side pleasures, of intellectual culture, and, in many instances, of moral rectitude—by days of toil and nights of sleeplessness, by a slavish devotion to the shrine of Mammon. The laurels of fame are never won by indolence and inactivity. There is, indeed, "no royal road to science," and he who would reach the highest round of the ladder, must also be content to burn the midnight oil, to struggle with adverse circumstances, and it may be, at the last, to suffer chagrin of defeat, while some more fortunate competitor gains the prize.

Go where we will, in this strange world of ours, among the high or low, the rich or poor, learned or unlearned, and we shall find within the heart, and almost see it written upon the brow, an undefined longing for something unattained, until the poor soul cries out: "Who will show us any good?" Ever following a phantom, which ever eludes the grasp, they still pursue it, only resting when the grave, cold and dreary, opens before them. We have all seen it, and felt it, and, in bitterness of spirit, sigh for Heaven, for a purer, loftier state of existence.

And this heaven for which we are panting, what is it? where is it? and who shall tell us? To the follower of the false prophet, it is a paradise of unlimited luxury and voluptuous beauty; to the poor savage, a vast hunting ground, where he may range at will. Are we not laboring under a mistake, when we look upon it as a locality somewhere, far, far away, among the skies?—dreaming that the soul's rest is only there. For aught we know, the future home of the pure in heart may be far more enchanting than an excited imagination ever conceived, and the glowing revelations of the exiled seer on lonely Patmos may be more than realized. Yet, is not the real heaven to be commenced here? Were our feet placed to-day upon the "mount of God," the heavenly Zion, could we hear the music of the harpers, and behold the golden streets and pearly gates, while our hearts retained the taint of earth-born passions, where were our heaven?

Turning back again to earth, our aching eyes look out upon the busy, restless mass of human beings, to see if we can discover anywhere the lineaments which speak to the beholder of aught save earthliness. Nor is our search wholly in vain, for here and there, scattered like good seed over the surface, we find those whose one great aim is to bring their own wills into subjection to that of their great Exemplar, and to toil for poor suffering humanity. Confined to no sect, contending for no creed, save that which embraces the great principles of love to God and man, the real Christian is the only true representative of the inhabitants of that land toward which he journeys. The springs of life are poisoned, and where peace and love were designed to hold undisputed sway, all is darkness and chaos. Man goes out in deadly warfare to slay his brother man; robbery and oppression, injustice and cruelty, have stalked forth at noon-day, for thousands of years. Honor to him who, with a firm and fearless adherence to the cause of right, stands alone, if need be, unmoved by threat or scorn. Conscious that if the stream of life be pure the fountain must first be cleansed, he bows in penitence before an insulted Deity, and finds in it the vast atonement, freedom, and strength, and peace. Then, and only then, is he prepared to stem successfully the tide of ignorance and sin. Then it is that the gold of earth seems worth possessing, for with it the widow's heart is gladdened, and the orphan's tears are dried, the cause of human freedom and the world's redemption advanced.

Reader, it is for you, for me, to create within and around us our own dwelling-place of rest. For us the sun pours its flood of light, and the stars their milder radiance—for us the flowers bloom and bird-notes echo—for us there are spirit voices waiting to whisper words of gladness and encouragement.

By making our every day life pure and lofty, by kind words, and self-denying deeds of love and charity, by hushing the tones of calumny and slander, and cherishing no feeling of envy or of malice, may we not have a pleasant and safe passage over that ocean, and find heaven here and yonder? Chicopee, January, 1856.

VARYING ASPECTS OF PERSECUTION.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.

Cardinal Wiseman has been replying to Lord John Russell's lecture, which included instances in which Progress had been retarded by Persecution. The reply of persecuting Catholicism to persecuting Protestantism is—"You're another." Yet Protestantism has this merit—its persecution is inconsistent with its principle, while it is justified by Catholicism. If Catholicism *does* repudiate persecution, let it say so. We have looked through the *Daily News* report of his Eminence's lecture, but found no repudiation there.

Mr. William Freckley, of Longton, who has lately read: "How to Observe—Morals and Manners," by Harriet Martineau, trusts we will quote, for the benefit of readers who may not have had the pleasure and advantage of reading the works, the following impressive passage on the modern forms of persecution:

"One great subject of observation and speculation remains—the objects and form of persecution for opinion in each country. Persecution for opinion is always going on among a people enlightened enough to entertain any opinions at all. There must always be, in such a nation, some who have gone further in research than others, and who, in making such an advance, have overstepped the boundaries of popular sympathy. The existence and sufferings of such are not to be denied because there are no fires at the stake, and no organized and authorized inquisition, and because formal excommunication is gone out of fashion. Persecution puts on other forms as ages elapse; but it is not extinct. It can be inflicted out of the province of law, as well as through it; by a neighborhood as well as from the Vatican. A wise and honest man may be wounded through his social affections, and in his domestic relations, as effectually as by flames, fetters, and public ignominy. There are wise and good persons in every civilized country, who are undergoing persecution in one form or another every day.

"Is it for precocity in science? or for certain opinions in politics? or for a peculiar mode of belief in the Christian religion, or unbelief of it; or for championship of an oppressed class? or for new views in morals? or for fresh inventions in the arts, apparently interfering with old-established interests? or for bold philosophical speculation? Who suffers arbitrary infliction, in short, and how, for any mode of thinking, and of faithful action upon thought? An observer would reject whatever he might be told of the paternal government of a Prince, if he saw upon a height a fortress in which men were suffering *carcere duro* for political opinions.

"In like manner whatever a nation may tell him of its love of liberty, should go for little if he sees a virtuous man's children taken from him on the ground of his holding an unusual religious belief; or citizens mobbed for asserting the rights of negroes; or moralists treated with public scorn for carrying out allowed principles to their ultimate issues; or scholars oppressed for throwing new light upon the sacred text; or philosophers denounced for bringing fresh facts to the surface of human knowledge, whether they seem to agree or not with long established superstitions.

"The kind and degree of infliction for opinion which is possible, and is practised in the time and place, will indicate to the observer the degree of imperfection in the popular idea of liberty. This is a kind of fact easy to ascertain, and worthy of all attention."

From the Lockport Telegraph.

ARISTOCRATIC CHRISTIANITY.

Reform is a word that sounds well.—Banners are inscribed with it and people tousle up their hands and shout "reform." The temperance lecturer and the statesman; the reader of smooth and varnished essays, and the stump orator in his grand-elocuent extemporaneous harangues to the people, delight in displaying the beauties of reform. As we said before, words sound well, but it is not with sounds alone we have to deal. Many content themselves with the sound, and go no further to inquire into its significance.

Reform may be applied to religion as to nations. Ever since the days of Martin Luther, religious reform has been actively at work. But it has mostly toiled in one direction. Its object seems to have been to adjust the wheels in the great machinery so as to work harmoniously. To this end huge volumes have been compiled and the libraries of the world ransacked.

But there is one part of the great principle of reform that has been gladly consigned to oblivion, and in this particular the Church is at war with the true spirit of Christianity. Costly palaces and magnificent temples are the great fountains from which the gospel at the present day is proclaimed to the people. Sermons carefully prepared accord-

ing to the strict rules of rhetoric and better calculated to captivate the taste than to convince the reason, are delivered weekly from sacred desks. The congregations recline on cushioned seats and criticize the sermon. The man of wealth has his pew fitted up with all the modern improvements to make attendance easy. Selected music opens the service and the rich peals rolling in soft music burst from the organ at its close.—Worshipful splendor pervades the "narrow path" to heaven and dresses the Christianity of the church in inviting robes.

Whether such a state of things indicates true Christianity, might perhaps be doubted. The founder of Christianity was born in poverty while on earth. His pulpit was the mountain rock, his audience sat on the naked ground, and his sermons were addressed to the poor. So great was his poverty that he had no where to lay his head. His mission was one of charity and mercy. He sought the poor, the ignorant, and lame and the blind. He delivered elaborate sermons on doctrinal points, from highly ornamented desks, to gentlemen in broadcloth, and ladies in silks and satin. When the rich sought him they did not seek him in splendid temples and gorgeous palaces, but sought him in the midst of his labors among the poor and the humble.

Here then lies the difference between the Christianity of the Church and the Christianity of Christ—the former is founded on worldly splendor, the latter in poverty.—Would it not be well, among the reforms of the age to introduce a reform in Christianity, and preach as they did of old—to poor well as to rich.

From the Stars and Stripes.

A DREAM OF HEAVEN.

BY MIRIAM WOODBURN.

"There are beautiful dreams of the spirit life,
That come to the stricken heart,
Like zephyrs that fill o'er the waters of strife,
To bid the wild tumult depart."

I know not how or when it came, whether in quiet slumber or waking reverie, but it remains indelibly impressed upon the tablet of memory. Mysteriously, time and space were annihilated, with an ever present, yet unseen, unknown guide I wandered through the streets of the "New Jerusalem." The golden, dazzling splendor, which other visions was too brilliant for human gaze, had given place to a calm, lovely radiance. There were the "green pastures," and the "still waters" bathed in the pure, holy light, which proceed from the throne of God.

As I passed along the narrow path by the side of the "river of life," I saw groups of happy ones walking in lovely vales or reclining upon some grassy hillcock. Loving round an elevation projecting into the path, almost down to the water's edge, came upon a group well known to me. My heart beat with a quicker throbb, as I gazed upon them. They were all there—not one missing.

Clad in white, shining robes, with golden hair in their hands, how beautiful and glorious they appeared to my mortal vision. Ever and anon I caught the sound of heavenly music, borne along by balmy breezes—then would ring out